

Executive Summary

The GYTS is a school based tobacco specific survey, which focuses on adolescents aged 13-15 years. In 2002, Uganda conducted this survey in two regions. The objectives of the survey were: to document and monitor the prevalence of tobacco-use; assess students' attitudes, knowledge and behaviors related to tobacco use and environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) exposure, as well as youth exposure to prevention curriculum in school, community programs, and media messages aimed at preventing and reducing youth tobacco use. The other objective was to provide information to guide programming and advocacy work addressing youth tobacco use.

The survey was carried out in July-August 2002 in two regions of Uganda- Central and Northern regions. In Central region- Kampala, Mpigi and Rest of Central Districts and Arua district in the Northern region. A two-stage cluster sample design was used to obtain the sample of students from Senior One-Senior Three. A total 77 out of 85 secondary schools participated in the survey, with 22 schools in Arua, 19 in Kampala, 18 in Mpigi and Rest of Central Districts, respectively. Out of the 10,390 selected students from all the four study districts, 8,078 participated. The overall response rate ranged between 80.7% and 62.1%.

Key findings:

- The prevalence rate of ever smokers (a cigarette, even one or two puff) among students aged 13-15 years is high, with 33.1% in Arua, 17.5% in Kampala, 18.2% in Mpigi and 12.6% in Rest of Central Districts. Of the students who were reported to have ever smoked, nearly 40% had initiated cigarette smoking before 10 years in Kampala, Mpigi and Rest of Central Districts compared to 18.4% of the students in Arua. Almost one in ten never smokers are likely to initiate smoking in next year.
- The percentage of students currently using any tobacco product is significantly high in all the districts. Current smokers account for 21.9% in Arua, 5.3% in Kampala, 6.7% in Mpigi and 4.7% in Rest of Central Districts. Similarly, Arua district (21.2%) reported with the highest percentage of students had used tobacco products other than cigarettes like chewing tobacco, snuff and cigars and Kampala district the lowest rate at 11.0%.
- Boys who smoke are likely to have more friends and attractive compared to their female counterparts. About twice as many students in all the districts think boys who smoke cigarettes have more friends than to those who think girls who smoke. Few students think that boys and girls who smoke are more attractive than non-smokers.

- Approximately, 30% of the current smokers in the districts of Kampala, Mpigi and Rest of Central Districts usually smoke at home and their friend's house compared to only 19.4% in Arua district. 60% of the current smokers in Arua, Kampala and Rest of Central Districts were not refused to purchase cigarettes from the store because of their age.
- Exposure to second-hand smoke both at home and public places is significantly high. About twice as many current smokers as never smokers were exposed to someone's smoke in public places. About seven in ten students, both current smokers and never smokers in all the districts thought that smoke from others is harmful to them and about half are in favor of a ban on smoking in public places.
- A significant number of current smokers expressed a desire to stop smoking (80%) with over 2/3 having attempted to stop smoking during the past year preceding the survey but not succeed. Over 80% of the current smokers had ever received help to stop smoking. A large proportion of students have been exposed to tobacco advertising in print and electronic media. Awareness level of students about tobacco use and effects is high. Approximately three-quarters (76.9%) of the students in Arua had been taught about the dangers and nearly 2/3 of the students in Kampala (65.6%), Mpigi (66.2%) and Rest of Central Districts (64.1%).

The survey results provide baseline data and evidence for the need to develop tobacco control interventions to reduce the potential tobacco related health care costs with emphasis on the young people through: increased taxation on tobacco products; tobacco control legislation to ban smoking from public places; restricting advertisement of tobacco products in print and electronic media; provide health education programs on tobacco use prevention and cessation to both in-and out-of-school adolescents. In this respect the following will be development partners parents, professional individuals- (teachers, health workers, community development and youth workers, welfare/probation officers, police, lawyers), and any other relevant adolescent friendly organizations, who/or which are willing to work for the health and welfare of young people.